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[Vietnam: Ground action was light and scattered throughout South Vietnam on 15-16 December as Communist units, recently deployed in III Corps, evaded wide-ranging allied sweeps and patrols.

Significant Communist action was limited to rocket and mortar attacks on several population centers. The provincial capitals of Kontum and Sa Dec were hit by enemy mortar rounds, but casualties were light. A small hamlet near Pleiku city was also struck by four rocket rounds which killed one civilian and wounded ten.

* * * *

During the four-week period ending 30 November, 1,535 Viet Cong supporters rallied to the government in IV Corps. This represents the highest monthly total attained in this corps area since the inception of the Chieu Hoi (Open Arms) program.

Information has come to light, however, which has led South Vietnamese Government officials to believe that the Communists are increasingly using the Chieu Hoi program to infiltrate government-controlled areas and the ranks of the military and civil service. An admitted false rallier in Vinh Binh Province has stated that the Viet Cong inaugurated a program called "flowers blooming inside the enemy's ranks," under which they are sending selected persons through the Chieu Hoi program with the eventual aim of joining the South Vietnamese Army. If this is not possible, the false ralliers are to return to their home villages and attempt to enlist in the local Popular Forces. Elsewhere in the delta, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] at least one village recently held a study session to discuss the utilization of false ralliers in government ranks during the next phase of Viet Cong attacks.]

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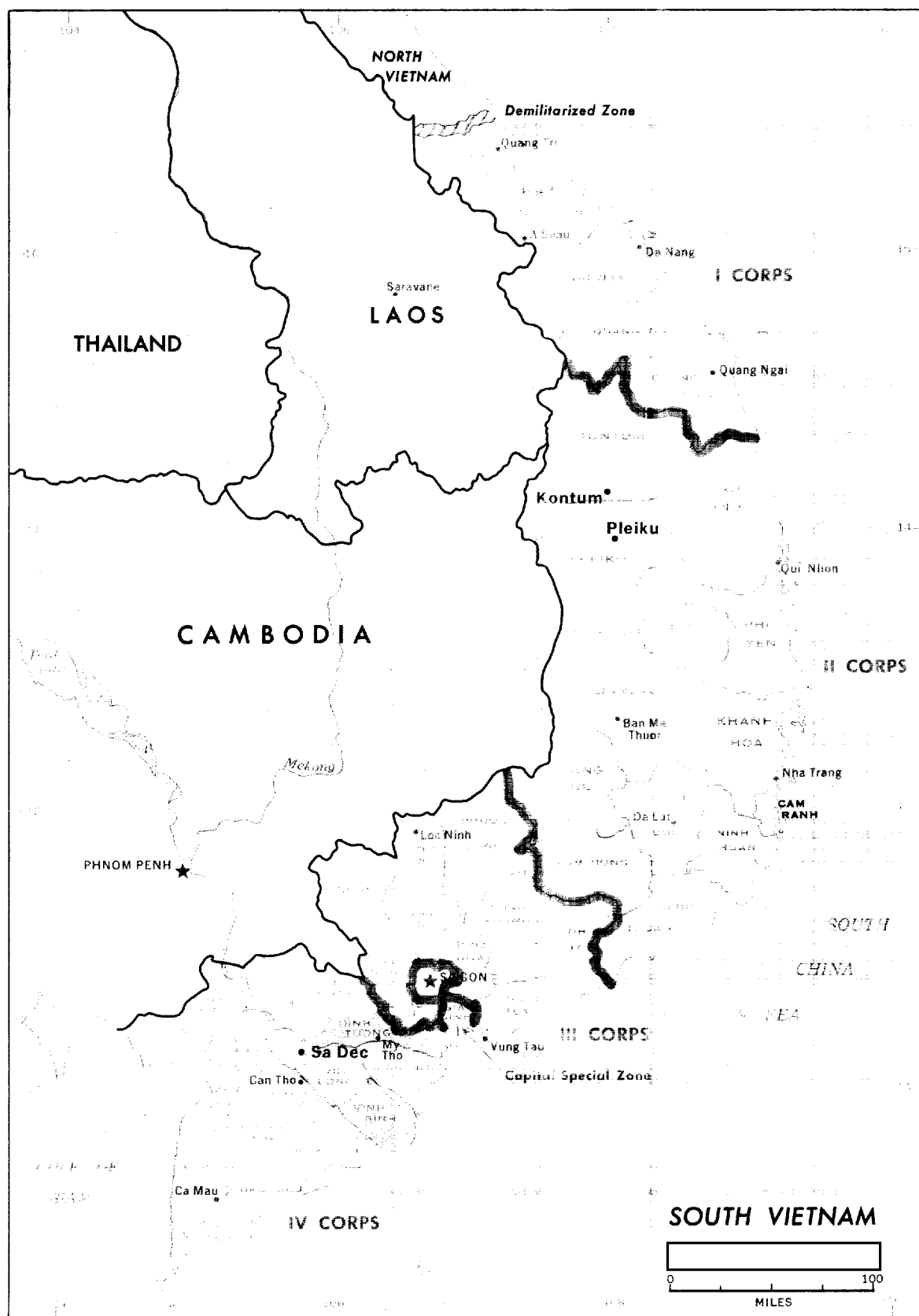
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[At the same time that the Communists use the Chieu Hoi program to help their agents acquire legal status for future operations, they are also interested in undermining the program's effectiveness in helping Viet Cong troops come over to the government side. Accordingly, the enemy presumably welcomes the official suspicions which ensue when enemy agents are discovered among the Hoi Chanh, since this distrust and the occasional rough treatment of ralliers by officials make the program less attractive to potential ralliers.

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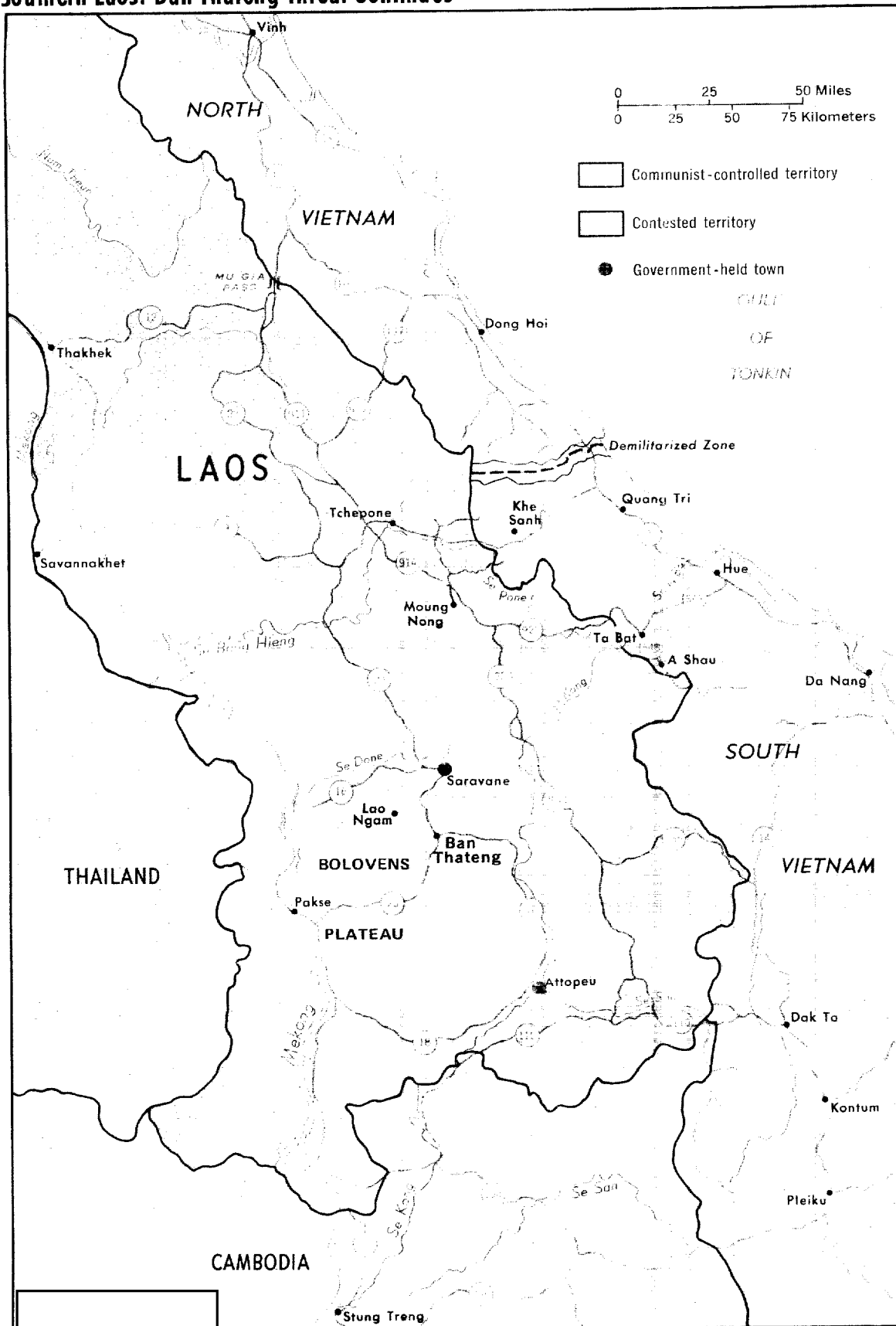
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Southern Laos: Ban Thateng Threat Continues



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[Laos: The fighting around Ban Thateng has eased during the past 24 hours, but a North Vietnamese battalion is still holding the village.

Government guerrillas, who set up blocking positions around the village on 15 December, so far have not reported any effort on the part of the enemy to reinforce. Reports are still coming in that additional North Vietnamese units are on their way from areas both south and north of Thateng.

The situation is quiet in other key areas around the rim of the Bolovens Plateau, but there is speculation that the Thateng attack presages a move against the provincial capitals of Saravane and Attopeu. Similar predictions were given wide currency last year, when the North Vietnamese launched two costly but otherwise meaningless attacks against Lao Ngam, on the western edge of the plateau.

The attack against Thateng is almost certainly in reaction to an intensified interdiction program against the North Vietnamese in the infiltration corridor, part of which has been mounted from the Thateng area. The vigor with which the North Vietnamese have pressed the attack, however, raises the possibility that it may be part of a wider campaign to take the Bolovens Plateau and upset the delicate military balance in southern Laos. (Map)]

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Zambia: Elections this week are unlikely to result in any major changes in leadership or policies.

On 19 December, Zambians go to the polls for the first time since independence to elect a president and a 105-man parliament. Two political parties, the ruling United National Independence Party (UNIP) and the opposition African National Congress (ANC), have submitted candidates and have been actively campaigning for several weeks. President Kenneth Kaunda's party, the UNIP, expects to get between 80 and 85 percent of the votes.

Violence has been increasing as election day draws near. Kaunda is under some pressure to ban the ANC but has been reluctant to do so, partly because he earlier claimed that Zambia would become a one-party state only via the ballot box. If not officially banned, the ANC probably will remain a small, not very cohesive opposition grouping which provides a forum for tribal and regional discontent.

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Luxembourg: The results of parliamentary elections held on Sunday reflect a change to a more conservative political mood on the part of the electorate.

The coalition parties, the Christian Socialists and the Socialists, lost one and three seats respectively. The free-enterprise Democratic Party, which campaigned against the government's fiscal policies, increased its seats from six to 11. The Democrats could thus become the alternative coalition partner for the Christian Socialists, but reconstitution of the outgoing coalition with the Socialists seems more likely.

Prime Minister Werner's government resigned on 29 October after Socialist trade union leaders pressed for increased wages and welfare benefits. Fears engendered by subsequent Communist successes in two municipal elections proved unfounded. The Communists gained only one percent of the vote, bringing to six their representation in the 56-member parliament.

No major change is expected in Luxembourg's foreign and defense policies.

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